

corresponding to the music piece title or the like of the contents.

Fig. 9D is a drawing illustrating the icon 205.

In the event that contents regarding which importing are selected, i.e., in the event that contents with the icon 203 are selected and the button 206 is clicked, the GUI unit 101 makes a request to the transfer processing unit 103 to import corresponding contents.

Next, the processing for displaying icons with the GUI unit 101 will be described with reference to the flowchart shown in Fig. 10.

In step S11, the GUI unit 101 judges whether or not the copy control flag contained in the rights information read out from the memory card 9 via the memory card plug-in 112 and the transfer processing unit 103 indicates permission to import, and in the event that judgment is made that the copy control flag indicates permission to import, the flow proceeds to step S12, the icon 203 indicating permission to import is set, and the flow proceeds to step S20.

In step S11, in the event that the GUI unit 101 judges that the copy control flag does not indicate permission to import, the flow proceeds to step S13, wherein the GUI unit 101 judges whether or not the copy control flag contained in the rights information indicates permission to move, and in the event that judgment is made that the copy control flag

indicates permission to move, the flow proceeds to step S14, the icon 205 indicating permission to move is set, and the flow proceeds to step S20.

In step S13, in the event that the GUI unit 101 judges that the copy control flag does not indicate permission to move, the flow proceeds to step S15, wherein the GUI unit 101 judges whether or not the copy control flag contained in the rights information indicates checked-out contents, and in the event that judgment is made that the copy control flag indicates checked-out contents, the flow proceeds to step S16.

In step S16, the GUI unit 101 judges whether or not the equipment ID contained in the rights information is the same as its own equipment ID, and in the event that judgment is made that the equipment ID contained in the rights information is the same as its own equipment ID, the flow proceeds to step S17, an icon indicating own check-out, i.e., the icon 202 indicating permission to check-in is set, and the flow proceeds to step S20.

In the event that judgment is made in step S16 that the equipment ID contained in the rights information is not the same as its own equipment ID, the flow proceeds to step S18, an icon indicating check-out from other equipment, i.e., the GUI unit 101 sets the icon 204 indicating that check-in is not permitted, and the flow proceeds to step S20.

In step S15, in the event that the GUI unit 101 judges that the copy control flag does not indicate checked-out contents, the flow proceeds to step S19, a default icon (an icon other than any of the icons 202, 203, 204, or 205) is set, and the flow proceeds to step S20.

In step S20, the GUI unit 101 displays the set icon, and the processing ends.

Thus, the GUI unit 101 displays icons corresponding to the copy control flag contained in the rights information read out from the memory card 9, the user can speedily know operations which are permitted regarding the contents.

Now, while the contents have been described as being music data, the contents may be data such as moving images, still images, numerical values, or may be programs or the like.

Also, description has been made with reference to an arrangement wherein the personal computer 1 reads out rights information from a memory card 9 and displays an icon, but the present invention is not restricted to a memory card 9; rather, rights information may be read out of portable devices 5, cellular telephones, portable video cassette recorders with picture-taking functions, portable personal computers, PDAs, and so forth, which store contents, whereby an icon is displayed.

Further, description has been made with reference to an